

ADOT/Lakewood meeting may be back on

by **Colleen Sparks** - Jun. 4, 2008 10:20 AM
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Two state legislators say they will mediate a meeting between state freeway officials and the Lakewood Community Association to talk about the proposed South Mountain Freeway.

Lakewood could lose at least 55 homes if the freeway were built, said Lakewood resident and South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team member John Rodriguez via e-mail.

House majority whip John McComish, R-Ahwatukee, and Senate majority whip John Huppenthal, R-Chandler, said members of the **Arizona** Department of Transportation-led freeway study team have agreed to attend a meeting where Lakewood HOA residents could ask questions about the freeway.

A meeting date has not yet been set but it could be June 17 or 18, Rodriguez said. A location has not yet been set but there is talk about having it at Pecos Community Center.

McComish said he and Huppenthal plan to meet with ADOT officials probably next week to set parameters for the public meeting. The two met with ADOT officials Monday to ask them to meet with the community group. A meeting planned May 21 to inform Lakewood members about the proposed South Mountain Freeway was cancelled after the ADOT team decided not to attend.

"I contacted ADOT and said, 'I think you're making a mistake; I understand what you said about not meeting with Lakewood,'" McComish said. "The **homeowners** there have legitimate questions."

He said he offered to act as an intermediary to lessen the tension between the residents and freeway study team.

During a May 19 Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee meeting, many Lakewood residents questioned the ADOT-led study team about the freeway and some asked why the May 21 meeting was cancelled. Tim Tait, an ADOT spokesman and study team member, said at the May 19 meeting that the study team had decided to "focus attention" on the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team meetings as a place for the public to provide input. Tait also stressed that public input is being taken during the planning process.

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